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AN

ODE

TO THE LATE

THOMAS EDWARDS, Esq;

Written in the Year M.DCC.LI.

By Dr. AKENSIDE.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

ODE

TO

THOMAS EDWARDS, Esq;

ON THE LATE EDITION OF

Mr. POPE's WORKS.

M. DCC. LI.

I.

BELIEVE me, EDWARDS, to restrain
The licence of a railer's tongue,
Is what but seldom men obtain
By sense or wit, by prose or song:
A task for more Herculean powers,
Nor suited to the sacred hours
Of leisure in the MUSE's bowers.

II.

In bowers where laurel weds with palm
The Muse, the blameleſs queen, reſides:
Fair fame attends, and wiſdom calm
Her eloquence harmonious guides:
While, ſhut for ever from her gate,
Oft trying, ſtill repining wait
Fierce envy and calumnious hate.

III.

Who then from her delightful bounds
Would ſtep one moment forth to heed
What impotent and ſavage ſounds
From their unhappy mouths proceed?
No: rather Spenser's lyre again
Prepare, and let thy pious ſtrain
For Pope's diſhonour'd ſhade complain.

IV.

Tell how diſpleas'd was every bard
When lately in the Elyſian grove
They of his Muſe's guardian heard,
His delegate to fame above;
And what with one accord they ſaid
Of wit in drooping age miſled,
And WARBURTON'S officious aid:

V.

How VIRGIL mourn'd the ſordid fate
To that melodious lyre aſſign'd
Beneath a tutor who ſo late
With Midas and his * rout combin'd
By ſpiteful clamor to confound
That very lyre's enchanting ſound,
Though liſtening realms admired around:

* During Mr. POPE's war with THEOBALD, CONCANEN, and the reſt of their tribe; Mr. WARBURTON, the preſent Lord Biſhop of *Glouceſter*, did with great zeal cultivate their friendſhip; having been introduc'd, forſooth, at the meetings of that reſpectable confederacy: a favor, which he afterwards ſpoke of in very high terms of complacency and thankfulneſs. At the ſame time, in his intercourſe with them, he treated Mr. POPE in a moſt contemptuous manner, and as a writer without genius. Of the truth of theſe aſſertions his Lordſhip can have no doubt, if he recollects his own correſpondence with CONCANEN: a part of which is ſtill in being, and will probably be remember'd as long as any of this prelate's writings.

VI.

How HORACE own'd he thought the fire
Of his friend POPE's ſatiric line
Did farther fuel ſcarce require
From ſuch a militant divine:
How MILTON ſcorn'd the ſophiſt vain
Who durſt approach his hallow'd ſtrain
With unwaſh'd hands and lips profane.

VII.

Then SHAKESPEARE debonnair and mild
Brought that ſtrange comment forth to view;
Conceits more deep, he ſaid and ſmil'd,
Than his own fools or madmen knew:
But thank'd a generous friend above,
Who did with free adventurous love
Such trophies from his tomb † remove.

† See the Canons of Criticiſm by Mr. EDWARDS.

VIII.

And if to POPE, in equal need,
The ſame kind office thou would'ſt pay,
Then, EDWARDS, all the band decreed
That future bards with frequent lay
Should call on thy auſpicious name,
From each abſurd intruder's claim
To keep inviolate their fame.

FINIS.

VIII.

And if to Fame, in equal need,
The same kind office thou would'ſt pay,
Then, EDWARDS, all the band decreed
That fame bards with frequent lay
Should call on thy auſpicious name,
From each alarm intruder's claim
To keep inviolate their fame.

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